

ADHD

A Guide for
Adults



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Mercer

Serving the New Jersey Capital Area

Table of Contents

- 3 Introduction
- 4 What is ADHD?
- 5 How Common is it?
- 6 Why is ADHD Important to Address?
- 7 Types of ADHD
- 8 Signs & Symptoms
- 9 How it Looks in Adults
- 10 Diagnosis
- 11 Common Misconceptions
- 13 Challenges of Living with ADHD
- 14 Health Implications
- 15 Treatment
- 17 Coping Strategies
- 18 Resources

Introduction

This toolkit is a guide to help **adults** with **ADHD** navigate **challenges** that come with the disorder.

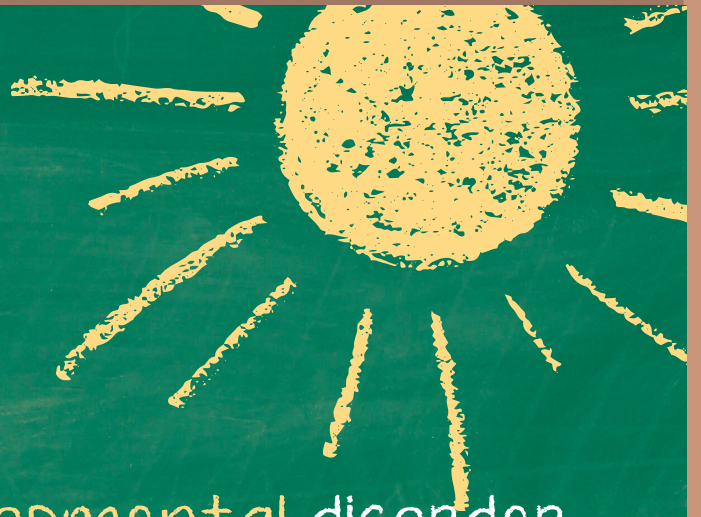
Included in this toolkit:

- ADHD **signs, symptoms,** and how to get **diagnosed**
- **Treatment options and support resources**
- **Coping strategies** for challenges that come with ADHD and related symptoms

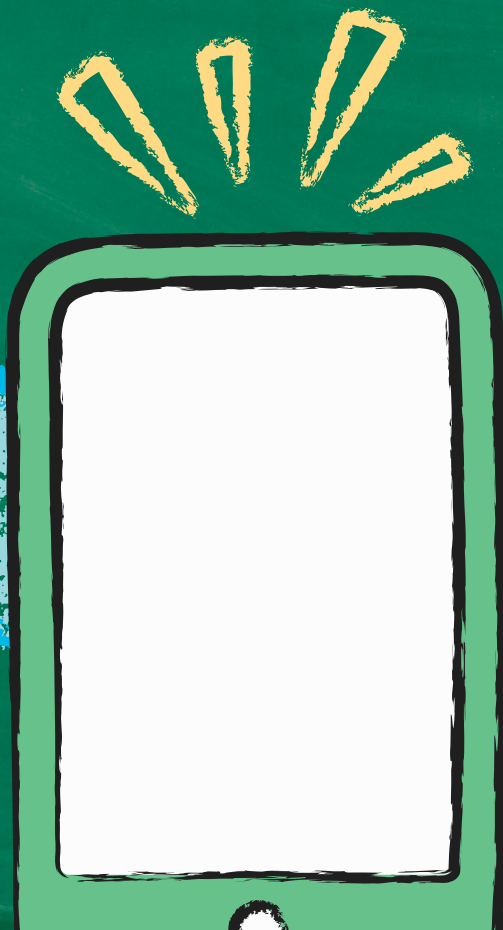


Adults who suspect they may have ADHD can use this guide to seek **diagnosis** and **support**.

What is ADHD?



ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder associated with inattentiveness, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Symptoms of ADHD can persist from childhood into adulthood and significantly interfere with aspects of daily living and relationships.



How Common is it?

5%

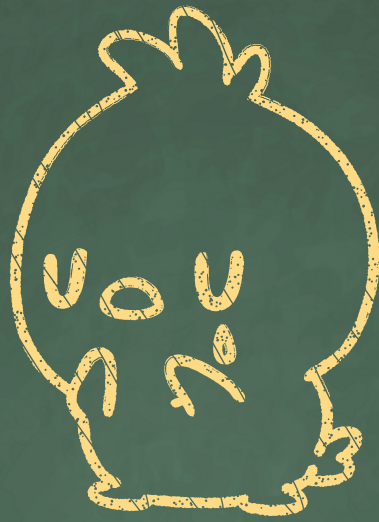


About 5% of adults have ADHD, which represents over 11 million people in the US.

About two-thirds of children with ADHD have symptoms that persist into adulthood.



Why is ADHD important to address?



- ADHD can have a significant negative impact on an individual, interfering with school, work, home life, and relationships
- Shame associated with inadequate performance and criticism can lead to anxiety and depression
- Educating people about ADHD will teach them how to manage it and improve their quality of life as well as raise awareness and alleviate conflict and blame in relationships

Types of ADHD

Inattentive

It is more difficult for these individuals to stay organized, finish tasks, pay attention to details, or follow instructions and conversations. They are easily distracted and often forget common daily tasks.

Hyperactive-impulsive

These individuals find it hard to sit still. They will often fidget and talk a lot, and may interrupt others during conversation. They tend to feel more restless and struggle with impulsivity.



Combined

These individuals present with the symptoms in both categories equally.

Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms **differ** among individuals and may **change** over time.

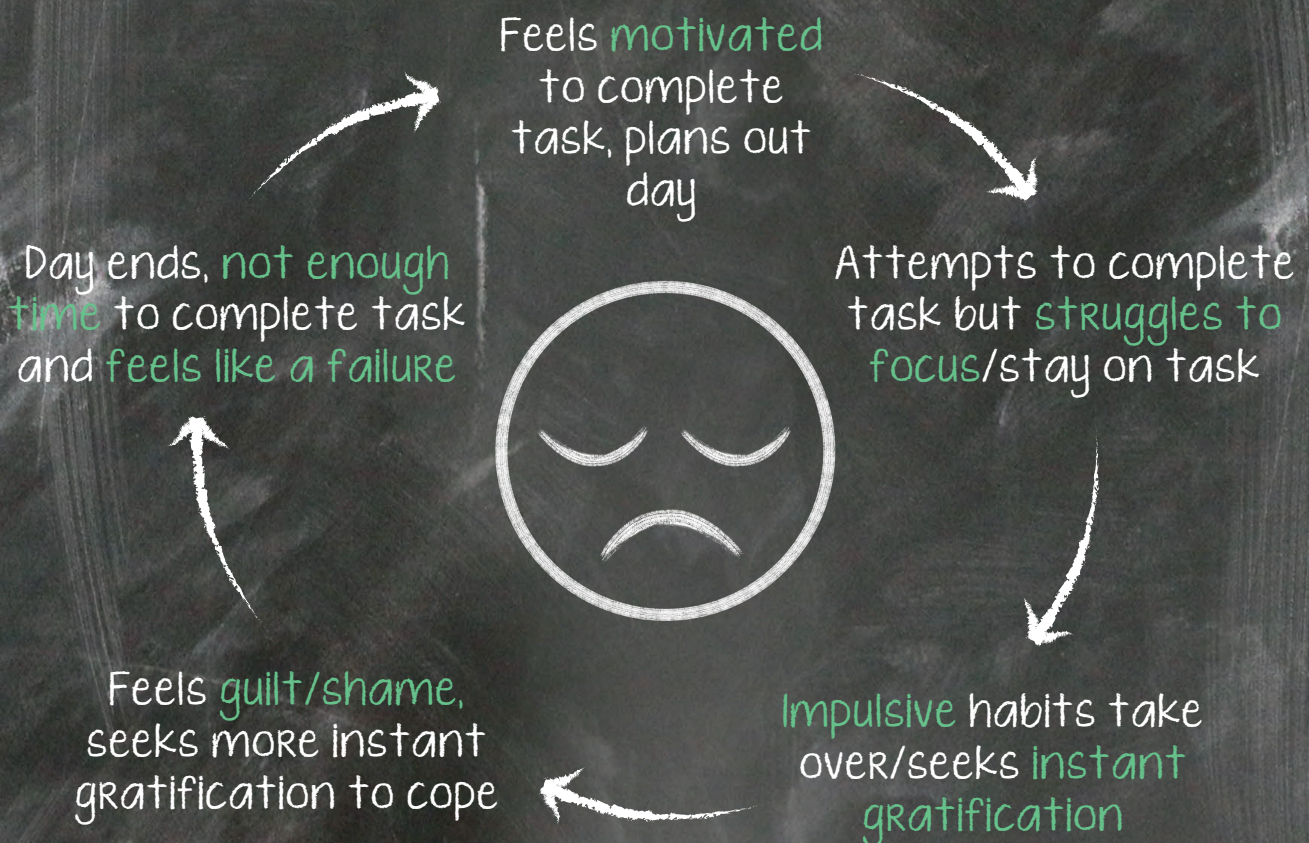
- Frequent **daydreaming**
- Forgettin** and losing things often
- Squirring** and fidgeting
- Excessive **talking**
- Interruptiong** others
- Difficulty resisting **temptation**
- Losing track of **time**
- Often **distracted**
- Difficulty **focusing** on or **finishing** tasks
- Hyperfocusing** on topics of interest
- Trouble** staying **organized**



How it Looks in Adults

Symptoms can become more severe as demands of adulthood increase, and cause difficulties with **work**, at home, and in **relationships**.

- Trouble **managing finances**
- Difficulty **transitioning to career**
- Poor **time management**
- Difficulty completing **daily tasks**
- Difficulty maintaining **relationships**
- **Shame, guilt, depression**



Diagnosis



There is **no single diagnostic** test for ADHD, but a qualified mental health care professional can perform a diagnostic evaluation using multiple sources. Check the **DSM-5** criteria to see if you should look into getting diagnosed by a qualified professional.



Scan here for DSM-5 criteria!



Common Misconceptions

ADHD is just being easily distracted!

People with ADHD are just lazy or don't care...

ADHD can be cured with medication!

Common Misconceptions

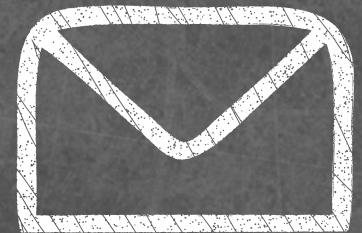
Children will just **outgrow**
ADHD!

People with ADHD can
never focus...

Everyone with ADHD
is **hyperactive!**

Challenges of Living with ADHD

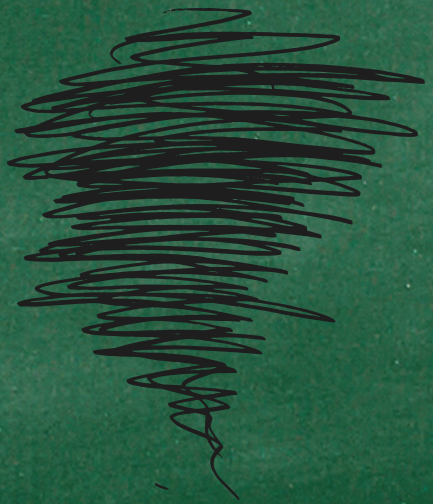
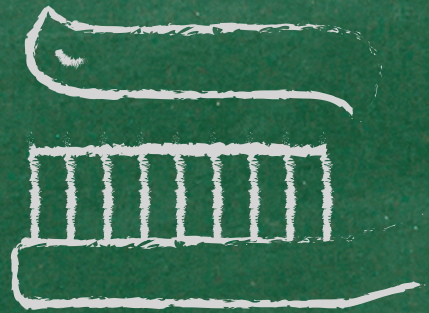
- Difficulty completing **tasks** (Cleaning, cooking, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Difficulty **focusing** on **school** OR **work**
- **Avoidance** of important tasks (meetings, responding to emails, bills, etc.)
- Loved ones misunderstanding difficulties as **laziness** OR **lack of care**
- Low self-esteem
- Difficulty **managing time**
- Difficulty maintaining **relationships**



Health Implications

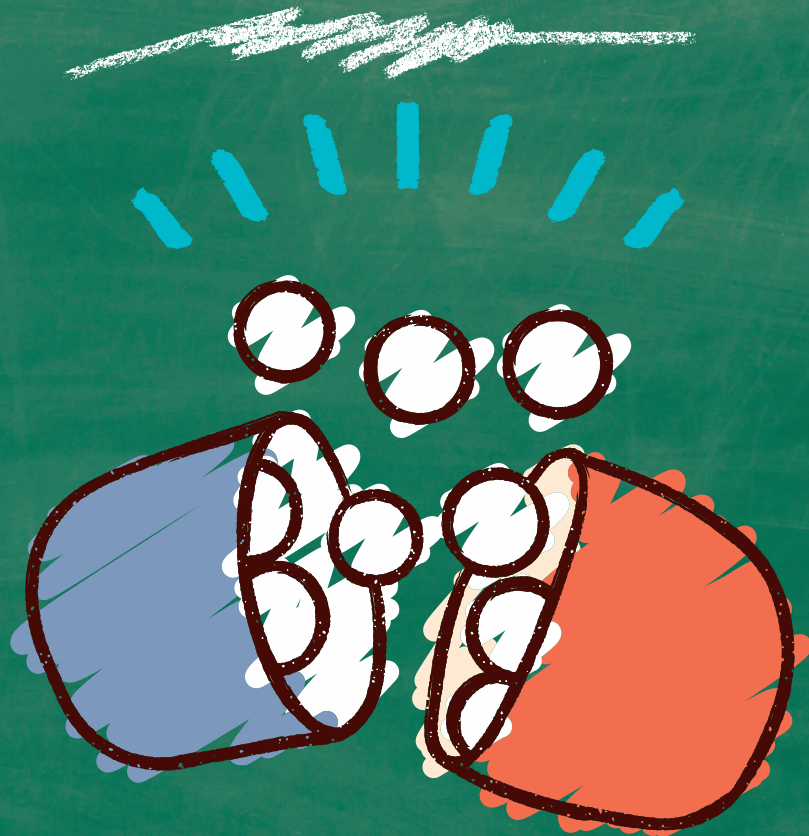
People with ADHD are at **higher risk** for **health conditions** as a result of the challenges of maintaining healthy behaviors. This includes but is not limited to:

- Weight gain
- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Poor oral health
- Anxiety and depression



Treatment

Medications



Medications are used to help ease the core symptoms of ADHD, not cure it. There is no one single medication used for ADHD, as they affect people differently. Not every medication will work for everyone and doctors will need to use a medication trial to judge which medication and what dose works best for each individual.

Treatment

Psychotherapy



ADHD treatment is not limited to medication alone and is often paired with psychotherapy, which includes cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Psychotherapy addresses the behavioral and emotional difficulties of ADHD and can help individuals to cope with daily challenges. It can help with other mental disorders that are common in those with ADHD, such as anxiety and depression.



Scan here for more information about
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy!



Coping Strategies

- Exercise regularly
- Create a routine, including setting consistent sleep and wake-up times
- Write down and prioritize time-sensitive tasks
- Schedule activities with families and friends
- Manage distractions, including turning off devices and moving out of distracting environments
- Practice mindfulness
- Take medications as instructed and use a 7-day pill organizer for medications



RESOURCES

Suicide and Crisis Hotline
Call 988



NAMI Mercer Helpline
Call (609)799-8994 x17

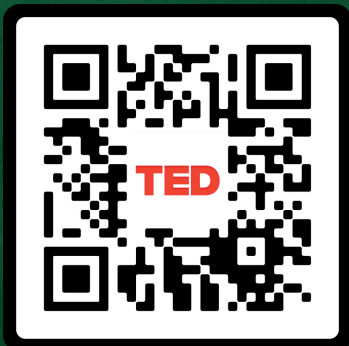
Getting Started
with Mindfulness



Attention Deficit
Disorder Association



ADHD Facts Sheets



Recognizing ADHD in
Adults - Ted Talk



Behavioral Health
Treatment Services
Locator

"Finish each day and be done
with it.

You have done what you
could. Some blunders and
absurdities no doubt crept
in, forget them as soon as
you can.

TOMORROW is a new day."



- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Author's Note

Matthew Michibata

I am a senior at The College of New Jersey, majoring in Public Health. As I have progressed through my education, it has helped me make discoveries about my own mental health and how my mind works. While on my own pathway to healing and learning more about myself, I hope to also help others on their own mental health journeys and guide them on a path of self-forgiveness and understanding.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Mercer

Serving the New Jersey Capital Area